

Message Text

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52

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 RSR-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAL-01 OMB-01 STR-08

CEA-02 AGR-20 INRE-00 /186 W
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R 030820 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5887

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION OECD PARIS

UNCLAS HELSINKI 0862

C O R R E C T E D COPY (FOR INFO ADDEE COPENHAGEN ADDEE)

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, FI

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT PASSES ECONOMIC POWERS BILL

REF: HELSINKI 811

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC POWERS LAW AS
EXTENDED BY ONE YEAR, STARTING APRIL 1. PASSAGE BY
PARLIAMENT WAS UNANIMOUS AFTER GOVERNMENT, AS SOP TO
CONSERVATIVES, INTRODUCED RELATED LEGISLATION CREATING
RENT CONTROL COURTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ECONOMIC POWERS LAW WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY
PARLIAMENT IN THIRD AND FINAL READING ON MARCH 29 AND
SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT ON MARCH 30, THUS EXTENDING FOR
ONE YEAR FROM APRIL 1 SPECIAL CONTROLS PRIMARILY ON
PRICES AND RENTS. CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION TO THE LAW,
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MANIFESTED IN THE PREVIOUS WEEK, WAS OVERCOME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT SIMULTANEOUSLY SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT A BILL CREATING SPECIAL RENT- CONTROL COURTS WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL COURTS SYSTEM. THE PREAMBLE TO THE ECONOMIC POWERS LAW WAS ALSO CHANGED TO CONTAIN SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE COURTS. OTHERWISE THE LAW WAS IDENTICAL TO THE PREVIOUS LEGISLATION AS WELL AS THE BILL BLOCKED BY THE CONSERVATIVES ON MARCH 23 (SEE REFTEL).

2. COMMUNIST THREATS TO KILL THE LAW IN THIRD READING WERE NOT CARRIED OUT. A STALINIST PROPOSAL FOR A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE WAS DEFEATED IN THE SKDL CAUCUS BY A VOTE OF 11-24 AND NEVER GOT TO THE FLOOR. A SUBSEQUENT SKDL RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE NEW DOMESTIC LEGISLATION IN 1973 WHICH WOULD TIGHTEN GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER THE ECONOMY WAS DEFEATED IN PARLIAMENT BY A VOTE OF 43-147. SEVERAL OBSTRUCTIONIST RESOLUTIONS BY THE SMALL RURAL AND UNITY PARTIES WERE ALSO HANDILY DEFEATED. THE ECONOMIC POLICY LAW WAS THEN DECLARED " URGENT," REQUIRING A 5/6 MAJORITY VOTE AND WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WHEN NO NEGATIVE VOTES WERE REGISTERED (SEVERAL STAUNCH CONSERVATIVE AND SWEDISH MP OPPONENTS ABSENTED THEMSELVES).

3. THE ELEVENTH HOUR PASSAGE OF THE ECONOMIC POWERS LAW WAS CREATED WITH SATISFACTION IN MANY QUARTERS, INCLUDING BOTH MANAGEMENT AND THE TRADE UNIONS, WHOSE ANNUAL WAGE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS HAD STALLED AND MOST WAGE CONTRACTS EXPIRED ON APRIL 1. MANAGEMENT HOPES THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE RESUMED IN TIME TO AVOID A SIGNIFICANT CONTRACT-FREE PERIOD AND THUS A POSSIBLE RISK OF STRIKES WERE MOMENTARILY DASHED. AFTER A WEEKEND ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IMPORTANT UNIONS IN THE METAL AND PAPER BRANCHES, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM ON WAGE INCREASES SHOWED NO SIGNS OF CLOSING. HOWEVER, NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE RESUMED ON APRIL 4 AND THE CURRENTLY PREVAILING MOOD IS ONE OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM.

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